

*Midnight in the Garden of Good and Evil*

By John Berendt

He was tall, about fifty, with darkly handsome, almost sinister features: a neatly trimmed mustache, hair turning silver at the temples, and eyes so black they were like the tinted windows of a sleek limousine - he could see out, but you couldn't see in. We were sitting in the living room of his Victorian house. It was a mansion, really, with fifteen-foot ceilings and large, well-proportioned rooms. A graceful spiral stairway rose from the center hall toward a domed skylight. There was a ballroom on the second floor. It was Mercer House, one of the last of Savannah's great houses still in private hands. Together with the walled garden and the carriage house in the back, it occupied an entire city block. If Mercer House was not quite the biggest private house in Savannah, it was certainly the most grandly furnished. Architectural Digest had devoted six pages to it. A book on the interiors of the world's great houses featured it alongside Sagamore Hill, Biltmore, and Chartwell. Mercer House was the envy of house-proud Savannah. Jim Williams lived in it alone.

*Midnight in the Garden of Good and Evil*

By John Berendt

He was tall, about fifty, with darkly handsome, almost sinister features: a neatly trimmed mustache, hair turning silver at the temples, and eyes so black they were like the tinted windows of a sleek limousine - he could see out, but you couldn't see in. We were sitting in the living room of his Victorian house. It was a mansion, really, with fifteen-foot ceilings and large, well-proportioned rooms. A graceful spiral stairway rose from the center hall toward a domed skylight. There was a ballroom on the second floor. It was Mercer House, one of the last of Savannah's great houses still in private hands. Together with the walled garden and the carriage house in the back, it occupied an entire city block. If Mercer House was not quite the biggest private house in Savannah, it was certainly the most grandly furnished. Architectural Digest had devoted six pages to it. A book on the interiors of the world's great houses featured it alongside Sagamore Hill, Biltmore, and Chartwell. Mercer House was the envy of house-proud Savannah. Jim Williams lived in it alone.